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BEGGAR MY NEIGHBOUR.

I THINK we have somehow left a long way behind us those good times to which belonged the proud boast that an Englishman's house was his castle. Are our houses castles now-a-days? I do not desire to treat the subject architecturally; I do not want to be tiresome in my regrets at the abandonment of permanent stone in favour of that poor ephemeral material known as stucco; I am not led away by any fancies for restoration; I do not ask to put the world's clock back; I have no intention of digging a moat round my residence, and making the butcher and baker, and other trades-people, who call for orders every morning, beg a parley first by sound of trumpet, before the drawbridge can be lowered for them to be informed that a leg of mutton will be required for the six o'clock dinner, that five half-quartern loaves (yesterday's baking) are needed for the family consumption, with some tops and bottoms for baby, a bag of rusks for its mother, and other like necessities of house-keeping. I have never dreamed of darkening my attics with battlements, or substituting a portcullis for my street-door. No man can be more conscious of the absurdity there would be in an attempt on the part of a resident, in Russell Square, for instance, to convert his house into anything approaching a medieval stronghold. When, therefore, I venture to suggest that an Englishman's house is no longer his castle, I must be understood as speaking figuratively rather than literally. A castle? No, a conservatory rather, a diaphanous edifice, a house with all the doors and windows open, or even with the whole front off; for there is a tendency in the age to abolish privacy in favour of publicity; there is now no reserve; the old reticence about, and respect for the home and the hearth, seem to have completely passed away. A sort of Japanese Happy Dispatch plan prevails now, though fortunately rather of a moral than a physical nature. People rip themselves up, and expect everybody they meet to do the same; they reveal the whole secrets of their lives, and look for yours in turn.

Men print themselves, their wives, their children, and their servants. They treat their houses on a like principle to the management of those melodramatic scenes at the theatre, in which the apparently solid stone wall, by means of gaslights placed behind it, is suddenly found to be quite transparent, and even of a gauzy material, so that certain of the players can be seen and heard through it, and what the playbill terms an 'apotheosis'—without anybody concerned probably having any distinct idea as to what that may signify—an apotheosis is enacted. Literature now is in great part

invasion of domestic retirement. The hero of a modern novel is made to be a man like any of us, with whiskers and Wellingtons; dining at chop-houses now and then, engaged in business, and going punctually to his office in the city; marrying for love, of course, but still keeping his eye on the settlements, as every man should. Paterfamilias is constantly in the newspapers shewing up himself and his household. How different was all this in the past! The old romance never attacked private life in this way, or presumed to represent actual existing nature. In my favourite novel of *Julia de Roubigné*, I find plenty about Savillon, and Segarva, and Montauban, but I feel that these do not touch me at all. The author is dealing with quite distinct genera compared to those to be found on the earth. In days gone by, too, Paterfamilias would have written to the journals as Erminio, or Eubulus, or Theodosius; no one would have thought him for a moment to be a real person—a man and a father. But now, every one must feel that he lives in imminent danger of being at any moment set up in type, so to speak, and published. Authors go about in search of specimens for their collections, just as naturalists secure butterflies in a net, and then run pins in them, to preserve them on cork for the contemplation of the curious; there is little enough difference between being stuck on a cork and fixed in print. A morbid realistic principle of writing obtains now, which I steadily denounce, while I concede that I have often derived amusement from it. But of course it is very funny to read all about Bobster (because we all know Bobster), and what he said and did, and how he looked when he said and did it, and what he had for dinner, and all about his excellent '34 port, and concerning his club, and Mrs Bobster, and the Misses Bobster, and his quarrel with his mother-in-law, and so on. This is very funny for us; but what do you think are Bobster's emotions?

We used to laugh at school when Sawyer Secundus received a rap on the knuckles from the doctor's ferule; but when our own turn came for a similar visitation from our preceptor, I don't think we were quite so highly entertained. The tax-gatherer is now at No. 22, which is some ten doors off; can I be certain that he will not come to me? May I not, on the contrary, be assured that he will, in due course? Will not the modern story-teller soon be in my hall? or in yours, my dear sir? and in that case, how about your house being your castle? Every right-minded man must feel that there is danger to the peace, and comfort, and seclusion of his life when the author presumes to be natural, and sets about sketching his neighbours walking in and out of their abodes as though they belonged to him, cataloguing their

furniture and fittings as though he were distraining for rent. For my part, I recognise my situation as similar to that of an animal in Mr Wombwell's peripatetic menagerie—liable at any moment to have one whole side of his travelling carriage removed, and himself exposed to the glare of publicity, and to be stirred up, possibly by a zealous keeper, to the performance of antics and extravagances, for the delectation of the crowd. I am not proud of my position. I have been at some pains to enunciate my sentiments—I have done so, some one may suggest, at considerable length—but it is because I feel strongly on the subject, and have a difficulty in putting my feelings into few words.

There is a proverb recommending us, if we want anything done, to do it ourselves. But how if we don't want it done? I say that the advice applies equally well. I don't want to appear in print the narrator of my own life and troubles; still I do reveal myself in that capacity, because I had rather be my own biographer, than afford anybody else such an admirable opportunity for undervaluing and misrepresenting me. I take the front off my house, because I had rather that Jones shouldn't do it for me. Depend upon it, that if we were all our own portrait-painters, picture-galleries would be full of very nice-looking faces; and if we all wrote our own histories, I think biography would be a very genial branch of literature. And now for my Happy Dispatch, which, I warrant you, I will administer with a stalwart arm, and in a thoroughly scientific manner.

Frankly, then, I am a middle-aged man—to be very particular, I was forty-eight last birthday. I am a merchant in the city of London (No. 902 Austin Friars, first floor); I confine my attention more especially to what is known as the Baltic trade, with an occasional glance now and then, perhaps, in the direction of indigo and spelter. The profits accruing from my share in the firm—there are three in the partnership, and we trade under the title of Bam-borough & Co., though there is now no Bam-borough amongst us—were, during last year, rather in excess of nine hundred pounds. Our business, it will be seen, was not enormous, but it was very respectably remunerative. I hope I am sufficiently explicit. Though here I would remark how cruelly the government of the country fosters the unfortunate propensity to make public property of all the private details of a household. I can take little credit to myself in respect of the above admissions, since I have been compelled by the legislature to deliver written confessions on the same subjects to certain of its officers. Have not the Census, and the Income and the Assessed taxes, wrung from me information on all these heads, with additional facts as to whether I wear hairpowder, keep farm-labourers or sheep-dogs, and whether I use a crest? Bilberry, my green-grocer, an excellent man, who renders useful aid in attendance at my dinner-parties, is also, it seems, a government functionary, and collects the inquisitorial documents it is my distasteful duty to fill up and sign. I have said he is an excellent man; I may add that he is a good green-grocer, and a tolerable waiter; but still I should not voluntarily have selected him to be a confidant touching my age, my income, my crest, and my non-use of hairpowder. However, I am so compelled. To continue. I lately resided in the neighbourhood of the square I have alluded to above.

I am the husband of an excellent woman—though I may say that I had no idea, when I married her, that she would ever have attained her present size. I am the father of six children—two boys and four girls—the youngest being the baby to whom I have already alluded, christened only last week, Barbara Leonora, after her maternal grandmother, who, I admit, was less liberal on the occasion than I had had reason to suppose she would have been. I did not expect an *electro-plated* mug.

I moved from my house near Russell Square six months ago. I am now the occupant of a ten-roomed semi-detached villa in a suburb north-east of London. A group of these villas round a small paddock seems to be the only excuse I can find for imposing on me the dignity of residing in a *park*. It is not a park, and is not, indeed, the least like a park; but what protest of mine will avail against the absurdities of builders' nomenclatures. My wife tells her friends that we moved from Russell Square to Guava Park, N.E., on account of the children, so that they might have purer air, and more room to play about in; that it broke her heart nearly to see them so prisoned by high brick-walls, as they were in our old house; and so on. For my part, I have simply to say that we moved to Guava Park, because we thought it would be cheaper, for my family was increasing with a rapidity disproportionate to the improvement of my income.

And Guava Park, *prima facie*, is decidedly cheaper; the house-rent is lower while the house is larger. I am within an omnibus ride of the Bank—I generally ride into town, and walk back. The situation is more healthy than my former residence, and the children obtain more air and exercise, and are the better in consequence. We are out of the reach of our old doctor, by which I also find I save money. He lived formerly so very near to us, that he was continually looking in upon us, as he went the round of his patients; and I think the fact of medical aid being always so close at hand, rather induced a predisposition for illness. One or other of the children seemed to be always taking powders, with about half a pot of gooseberry-jam administered after the medicine, to negative it, I suppose. Still, I do not say that the nurse and the doctor were in league together.

The villa is tolerably comfortable. It is of modern construction, and supposed to be possessed of all the latest improvements in building. I need not add, therefore, that two or three of the chimneys smoke violently; and that when the back kitchen-door is left open—the aspect on that side being north-north-east—a terrible draught blows through the house, sets all the doors banging one after another, like file-firing at a review, and makes every one turn and shiver in his chair. Still, I say, we are comfortable. The expense of the garden, certainly, I had not originally taken into account; but I could not bear to see that enclosure of untidy vegetation—the long rank grass that would grow in such ugly tufts and bunches; the coarse gravel paths, that looked like newly macadamised roads, and were so very painful to walk upon. I persuaded myself that it was a bad example to have constantly before the children that neglected, unkempt, ugly piece of ground, and I submitted with decent cheerfulness to a considerable expenditure to have it put in repair—newly gravelled, moulded, and turfed, and made pleasant to contemplate. I am quite

aware that the gardener who toiled in the cause of order overcharged me shamefully for his exertions, and also for a variety of seeds, roots, and plants, alleged to be in course of growth, for the decoration of my flower-beds, but which I have never yet seen, and have now grave doubts as to whether I ever shall see. A summer-house at the end of the garden I new-roofed and painted: but as I could come to no sort of terms with the earwigs who were in occupation, and refused to be dislodged by any means that I could resort to, I have been compelled to abandon it. I can only regard it now as of no use to me whatever, and as rather a disagreeable object in the prospect from my back windows. It will be seen that mine is what auctioneers call a desirable residence. Why, then, am I unhappy in Guava Park? Why do I think of quitting it, and to what end am I entering upon this narrative, apart from the desire to anticipate Jones in writing my biography? I will explain.

Guava Park is not nearly so inexpensive as it seems. In this wise. In Russell Square, we knew no one—to this hour I am unacquainted with the names of the tenants who occupied houses on either side of me. In Guava Park, matters are managed very differently. I have said that we live in one of what are called semi-detached villas—Siamese twin villas they might be designated. Our next-door neighbours, tenants of the house twin with ours—the persons on the other side of our party-wall—are the Simpsons. I have not a word to say against them, only I know this—I did not court their acquaintance. I desired to know my neighbours as little in Guava Park as I had known them in the precincts of Russell Square. But what could I do? I met Mr Simpson every morning in the omnibus going to the city; he would say that it was a fine morning, or a wet morning, or remark that he didn't think it would hold up throughout the day, or that he *did* think it would hold up throughout the day, and so on. And he proffered his snuff-box, and lent his newspapers. He was a merchant in the Turkey-rhubarb line. I found, too, that his opinions agreed with mine in reference to spelter, while we did not differ materially on the question of indigo. Our political sentiments, also, presented many points of approximation. He was a most respectable man, and member of a very well-known firm in Billiter Court. I could not help myself. I could not tell Simpson that I did not want to know him, because I thought him really a very worthy gentleman. I liked his conversation, and I liked his snuff. I am not, I trust, an unamiable person, and soon Mr Simpson and myself were on terms of considerable cordiality. And there were other points of approach between the two families. The little Simpsons (five in all—three boys and two girls) met my sons and daughters in the paddock-park; they made acquaintance with each other in the informal way usual with children. They were always to be seen, a little intermixed flock, sporting together on the green turf. Could I object to that really pleasant spectacle? And the mothers had interchanged civilities. There had been some trifling mistake about their relative butchers' books; a leg of lamb had been accidentally charged to No. 10 instead of to No. 11; the adjustment of this error had, it seemed, necessitated a meeting between the ladies. They were, I believe, mutually charmed with each other. A state of acquaintance commenced between them; this gradually ripened into friendship, clenched and made firm for ever when my wife was fortunately able on one occasion, in the dead of night, to lend Mrs Simpson a small quantity of opodeldoc, or some such thing—I was very sleepy at the time—for the relief of one of the young Simpsons from an attack of illness, with the precise nature of which I am unacquainted.

And what reason have I for objecting to the

Simpsons? Why would I rather that we had never known people whose society is so very agreeable, if not edifying? The fact is, that between our two houses there has sprung up, unconsciously it may be, but no less certainly, a system of competition and antagonism which is reprehensible, if for no other reason, because it betrays us both into most absurd and unlooked-for expenses. In some way the Simpsons have come to be regarded as a sort of key-note of the Park. We are all to take our tone from them; to outshine them even if we can, but never to beam with a lesser light. 'George,' said my wife to me the other day, 'how can you go into the garden in that old gray cap? I saw Mr Simpson only last evening raking his flower-beds in *quite a new hat*.' That hints the line of argument prevailing in Guava Park. But I will give further instances. The Simpsons invited us to dinner—a pleasant friendly party—green-pea soup, fore-quarter of lamb, &c., and champagne! I had made a rule never to give champagne at my parties, regarding it as a drink whose merits bear no proportion to its cost. On a subsequent occasion, the Simpsons dined with us. My wife insisted upon it that we should also give champagne—my rule was rudely broken through—while she was at some pains to cap their banquet by providing mock-turtle soup and a *neck of venison*. And then, too, *we had one more man to wait at table than the Simpsons had*—a friend of Bilberry, the green-grocer, who certainly did not make the wine go so far as he might have done on the occasion. My wife was triumphant that evening. I am sure Mrs Simpson did not enjoy her dinner; the sense of being beaten was too new and strong. But, of course, she had her vengeance. The next time we dined next door there was *real turtle*; and there was, too, a *haunch of venison*, to say nothing of champagne all through dinner. It was as though we were dining at the Mansion-house; and I have no hesitation in mentioning, that I enjoyed the repast amazingly; but my poor wife turned so pale, and looked so ill, that I feared she would have to be led from the table. Of course that was the last of the dinners; we were beaten. I steadily set my face against any further exertions. I think my wife had a plan once for hiring gold plate, if, indeed, she did not dream of engaging a man in armour to stand behind Mrs Simpson's chair. But I was peremptory on the subject; and I told Simpson himself jocosely, that the next time he dined with me there should be no state at all, and only cold beef and pickles on the table—no more civic banquets in Guava Park.

But the battle is carried on in other parts of the field. My wife used to be content to hire a one-horse fly now and then to make an excursion to London, call upon her friends, leave her card (and mine), and perform certain feats of shopping at the West End. Since she had seen Mrs Simpson in a two-pair barouche, however, her ladyship always now insists upon that kind of vehicle being provided for her. And the rivalry in dress! How my wife does pit her bonnet against Mrs Simpson's! They are both large women, I should mention—fine women, even. If Mrs Simpson has the advantage in weight, it must be conceded to her also that she is a trifle the redder in complexion. If one lady appears in a French Balzarine flounced robe, the other shines in a Solferino brocaded cashmere; and so they go on through French glacé silks and Lyon Ducapes to the grandest moire antiques, culminating in the richest cherry-coloured velvets, beyond which it hardly seems possible to go in the way of magnificence of costume. They have each a dress of that gorgeous material, and are now striving simply who shall put the most breadths into her skirt, and load her arms the most heavily with gold bracelets, when she has got the velvet on. I believe my wife would like me to mortgage my whole possessions, and with the amount so obtained in some way hire the crown-jewels—

though but for an evening—so that she might finally eclipse Mrs Simpson, and have done with it. And the children, I regret to say, are also brought into action, and set in opposition to each other much in the manner I understand the gentlemen who call themselves the fancy treat their dogs. My wife is prepared, I believe, to back our Maria Jane—at catch-weight, perhaps, though I don't the least know what that means—to sing better, play better, repeat her French irregular verbs more rapidly and correctly, and answer in a given time more questions out of Guy, Pinnoke, and Magnall, than Clementina Simpson. My son William and little Reginald Simpson are running a race through the Eton Latin Grammar: their pace has been almost dangerous, though the way they took the third declension was sportsmanlike and admirable in the extreme. It has all become a system of competition—unrestricted competition, I may call it. We are playing a game of Beggar my Neighbour. Now the Simpsons win a trick, and now we do. The expenses are becoming enormous, and every day I wish myself back again into my dearer house in Russell Square. It is in vain I make remonstrances or attempt reforms.

'Totty, naughty Totty,' said my wife at the dinner-table the other day, 'take your fingers out of your plate—do! Lotty Simpson never puts her fingers in her plate—never! What would she say if she knew that you did?'

The children are thus inoculated with the idea of emulating and surpassing the Simpsons. How is it to end? Seriously, I feel sure there can be no other kind of conclusion to it. And it pervades the whole house. Our nursery and kitchen have entered upon a contest with the Simpsons' nursery and kitchen, to ascertain which can assert its superiority in being the most expensive, extravagant, and wasteful—which can consume the most milk and bread, beef, beer, potatoes. I shudder as I contemplate my liabilities to the tradespeople on these accounts, and I wish very much that the game was over, and that Simpson was beggared, or that I was. Of the two, perhaps I should prefer the former; and I sometimes commune with myself as to whether it would not be advisable to offer to fight Simpson, make a ring in the park paddock, throw our caps into it, and permit the best man to win, and to have done with the whole business. One thing—I don't think Simpson is at all a fighting-man, and I am quite sure I am not.

Meanwhile, we are, to all appearances, on the terms of the strictest friendship. No one would imagine, for a moment, to see Simpson and myself journeying to town in the omnibus, the bitter antagonism existing between us, and ranking in the bosoms of our household. No one would dream who witnesses a meeting between Mrs Simpson and my wife—I have even seen them kiss on such an occasion! But women will always overdo a thing—no one would dream of the terms of violent hostility on which those two really live. And the children, I regret to say, are equally hypocritical—that is, almost; for the honesty of child-nature will assert itself now and then; as, for instance, when our Maria Jane frankly told Clementina that she didn't believe she had done her drawing without any assistance from the drawing-master—I am afraid our child so far forgot what was due to herself and society as to term the other young lady a 'wicked story'; and when my son William administered a black eye to Reginald Simpson—quite accidentally, of course, as I assured Mrs Simpson—though the matter did arise in some way from a dispute about a passage in Cornelius Nepos. How can I reconcile my conduct with my conscience, when I recollect that I afterwards gave my boy a shilling for his gallant, disgraceful, glorious, improper behaviour!

'My dear George,' said my wife to me the other evening after tea, and when the children had retired for the night, and we were quite alone; I thought

there had been something on her mind all dinner-time, although she did take an extra glass of port-wine—'My dear George, what do you think?'

'I don't know at all, my dear,' I said, rather abruptly perhaps, for in truth I dislike people who have a communication to impart delaying the matter, under the notion of giving it importance and interest—'I don't know at all!'

'I am sorry to tell you that Mrs Simpson has ordered black velvet dresses for all her children—the very best black Genoa velvet—with double skirts for the girls, and knickerbockers and silk stockings for the boys.'

'Well, my dear, what is that to us?' though of course I knew very well what it was to us.

'Why, George, you wouldn't like your children to be beaten by the Simpsons, would you?'

'Look here, Mary Ann, I said, 'there must be an end to this. How can I afford to put all my children into black velvet dresses?'

My wife turned quite pale.

'You wouldn't like your children to be in merino, while their children are strutting about in velvet, would you, George? Poor things, it would break their hearts! I shouldn't like them to beat us in this. And do you know, George, that our baby weighs a great deal more than theirs does, although it is three weeks younger.'

This was gratifying, of course, but still I was firm.

'And do you think, Mary Ann, that I shall consent to clothe our William in black Genoa velvet?'

'Their Reginald's been measured for his dress,' my wife answered, with a sigh. I think she was rather frightened at my determined aspect.

'Why, his knees will be through it in a week,' I remarked.

'How would you dress the boy?' my beloved Mary Ann inquired with a little snappishness.

'If I had my will,' I replied with some temper, 'I'd put my boy William into a serviceable skeleton suit of corduroys.'

'Corduroys! Oh, George!' I thought she would have fainted. 'A skeleton suit! Oh! what would the Simpsons say?'

'My dear, I have worn in my youth a skeleton suit,' I said, with much majesty; 'a very admirable dress for youth. As the boy grows, you can lengthen the suit by moving the buttons, and putting new cuffs to the sleeves; and with a neat frill round the neck, what can be prettier?'

'Ugh!' cried my wife with such an agonising look of disgust, as she found me firm. She burst into tears, and of course I yielded, as all husbands do under such circumstances. I gave my consent to black velvet dresses being ordered for my children, and I was kept awake at night wondering how long I should be able to maintain such a ruinous system of expenditure. The game of Beggar my Neighbour went bravely on. Which of us will be in the Court of Bankruptcy first? I asked myself sardonically.

The next morning I was, as usual, sitting opposite to Simpson in the half-past nine o'clock omnibus. I noticed that he looked pale, jaded, and anxious. At last he said, with palpable nervousness and embarrassment: 'I find that the air of Guava Park does not agree with me.'

I could see by his expression what he meant. He had had enough of the game of Beggar my Neighbour.

'You thinking of leaving?'

'Yes, immediately. I shall go further in the country—much further. I want a more bracing air.'

I knew all about that, and he knew that I knew all about that. He took snuff violently, and hid himself in his morning paper.

The Simpsons' house was empty for six months, and was then taken by an invalid old lady, who never stirs out. There is an end to the unrestricted

competition in Guava Park, and I am all the richer in consequence. I am positively saving money, and I hope Simpson is doing the same. I hope also that I have not taken the front off my house for nothing.

FRUITS AND FLOWERS OF THE EAST.

WHERE begins that portion of the world which we designate by the comprehensive phrase, the East? Is it at the Strait of Gibraltar, or at the Great Syrtis, or at the mouth of the Nile? Most persons, we fancy, when thinking on this subject, include Africa, both shores of the Mediterranean beyond the Adriatic, the countries on the Black Sea, and even the Steppes of Central Asia as far as the distant Amoor, together with Arabia, Syria, Persia, India within and beyond the Ganges, China, and the Oriental Archipelago. To travel over these vast regions in search of fruits and flowers, which vary in flavour, perfume, and aspect with every variation of soil and climate, is to plunge into a world of romance, invested with the richest colours of poetry, and prolific in the wildest and most exciting associations. No portion of this immense field, extending from the frontiers of Siberia to the emerald and scented isles of the Indian Ocean, is more replete with vegetable wealth and beauty than the banks of one African river, which runs an almost solitary course of two thousand miles, partly through deserts, partly through the richest soil on the globe's surface. That river is the Nile. Imagine yourself in the country which it has created, when, after pouring itself over the land like a sea, and impregnating it with exhaustless fertility, it ebbs and shrinks into its own channel, leaving the whole plain from Libya to the Arabian mountains sprinkled thickly with glittering sheets of water, which diminish rapidly in dimensions as the sun glows upon their surface, and greedily licks up their moisture. Down to their edge grows the green grass, mingled with small feathery reeds, whose tremulous waving is reflected from the face of the pools. In patches at intervals from bank to bank, you behold flowers of rare beauty, white, bright blue, and rose-coloured, floating amid broad green leaves, which lie soft and cool like the bed of a *jinnegh* upon the waters. These variegated flowers are the lotuses or lilies of Egypt. Nothing in the floral world is so white as the white lilies of the Nile, which, as they place their chalice beside those of their rosy and blue sisters, bear away the palm of beauty from them both.

If you wander among these ponds just as the gray dawn is breaking over the earth, you may often behold a gazelle come from the desert into the valley to drink, standing still and apparently gazing at the lotuses before it stoops to taste the water. The Arabs, who pretend to know exactly what passes in the mind of the animal, maintain strenuously that it is praying before it drinks, and expressing its gratitude at the sight of the multiplied beauties around it. Near at hand, with its legs twisted up under it, lies the camel, meditating on its day's work, and philosophically preparing to encounter it; while flights of large white birds alight on the tall trees, or descend and skim playfully along the lakes. These are the only representatives of the sacred ibis now known in the valley—the black species, more rare or more timid, having retired into the depths of Africa, where a stray specimen is sometimes shot by the fowler.

Science, although it has been busy in the explora-

tion of Egypt, has not yet described, or perhaps discovered, all the opulence of its flora. In brakes and copses by the wayside lurk little flowers, too small and modest in their structure to attract the attention of the eye, but so full of sweetness, that they may almost be said to intoxicate the senses as they throw their fragrance around into the air. The natives have yet found no names to bestow on these minute denizens of the wilderness, but say—which is true—that they are sweeter than the jasmine. Even the clover may here be reckoned among flowers, since, when steeped in dew, just when it is on the point of reaching its full development, it diffuses a delicate scent, less powerful than that of the lime-tree, but somewhat akin to it in character, which, rising from a whole plain at once, fills the atmosphere.

Skirting these meadows, you observe a succession of orange groves, which possess the peculiarity of being in flower, while the fruit in all stages hangs clustering among the branches, some of a bright green; some half ripe, covered with patches of green and yellow; while others, so ripe as to be ready to drop, look like spheres of pure gold suspended among branches of emerald. Close at hand rises the banana, with leaves ten or twelve feet in length, and a foot and a half broad, reaching from the summit of the tree to the ground, and affording at noon a delicious shade. High up among their stems, you behold the clustering purple fruit, covered with a delicate bloom like that of the peach, and emitting a fragrant odour. If there be any fruit surpassing the banana in flavour, it is the mangosteen of the Malay Peninsula, to taste which the travelled lovers of such delicacies maintain to be worth a voyage to Malacca.

In dates, however, which, ripe or dry, you might eat for ever, no part of the world can truly be said to equal Egypt, where, near the tropic, they attain to the length of three inches, and are of corresponding thickness. These are the golden dates which perfume the apartment into which they are brought, and appear at a distance like amber. The palms on which they grow are the most superb fruit trees in the creation. Ranging from one hundred to one hundred and twenty feet in height, they become in autumn almost top-heavy with dates, which hang between the stems of the leaves in huge clusters, each of which is sometimes one hundred pounds in weight. By many, the purple date is preferred before the yellow; but being more luscious, it cannot, when ripe, be eaten in any great quantity. When laid up for use, the dates are commonly dried separately; but in some parts of the valley, as well as in the desert, the Arabs collect a quantity of yellow and purple dates, and having taken out the stones, pile them indiscriminately in heaps; then subjecting them to pressure, they reduce them into masses something like large plum-puddings, which they cut in slices, and eat like cake. The only objection to this date conserve, when made in the desert, is, that it usually contains small particles of sand, which grate unpleasantly under the teeth.

Early in February, the gardens of the Upper Nile already glow with ripe fruit—the *Rhamnus lotus*—in size and colour resembling a white cherry, delicately red on the sunny side. The trees which produce it, in colour and shape more elegant than the cypress or the poplar, grow to a considerable height, especially at Siout, where they form large groves, extending towards the Libyan mountains. Formerly, the vine

flourished in every part of Egypt, but more especially along the shores of Mareotic lake, where it spread like a net-work over the sand-hills, and produced grapes equally renowned for their flavour and beauty. In the same locality, there are now several rustic coffee-houses, covered all over with vines, where the Turks recline on out-of-door divans, to enjoy the luxury of smoking, and eating grapes plucked fresh from the tree. Elsewhere, standing amid immense rose-gardens, are extensive olive groves, which remind the traveller of Attica, by the richness of their fruit, and the incessant whispering of their gray-green leaves.

Beyond the Red Sea, and on this side of the Persian Gulf, there is one spot, and but one, which may be said to rival in beauty, fragrance, and the exquisite quality of its fruit, the Valley of Cashmere, the gardens of Shiraz, or even the elevated valleys of Kabulistan: this is Tayef, at a short distance from Mecca, where the rose, the jasmine, the lily, and the violet cluster round the springs and rivulets, and are shaded by the date-palm, the pomegranate, the vine, the apple, and the tamarind trees. Here the poets of Arabia dreamed of the gardens of Irem, existing somewhere in the desert, but only to be approached under supernatural guidance. Further south, in the mountains of Yemen, are the coffee-plantations, which present to the traveller a prospect of singular beauty. Planted in terraces, rising one above another on the steep slopes, the coffee-tree, with its white blossoms or green berries, is shaded by other trees of much greater magnitude, which are planted near for its protection from the sun. Under this thick roof of foliage it puts forth its flowers, and ripens its fruit, which would otherwise be immediately scorched and destroyed by exposure to the burning heat. The same chain of mountains sweeping in an irregular line towards Bab-el-Mandeb, or the 'Gate of Tears,' where it makes a sudden bend to the east, shelters in its green folds the incense-trees, whose produce, adulterated or imitated, soothes the senses of millions of worshippers in Catholic countries. In many parts of the East, vast plains are carpeted with tulips, hyacinths, and ranunculuses, while the hills and ruins are studded with the wild anemone, the astur, the oleander, and the golden henbane. Syria is famous for its balm, its roses, its lilies, its silk-trees, which bear the famous apples of Sodom, delicate without as the fairest peach, but internally filled with dust and ashes. This statement, which looks like a fable, is partially true. The fruit of the *ashay*—the native name for the silk-tree—is larger than a man's fist, and of a delicate pea-green, verging in parts towards white, though on the sunny side as red as an apple. When unripe, it is filled with a white juice, which gradually becomes transformed into a mass of seeds, suspended to a delicate flossy silk, designed by nature to enable them, when the apple bursts, to float away in the wind, thus providing for the continuance of the species. Occasionally, a little worm—the *teredo*—bores its way into the Sodomitic apple, and feeds upon its contents until nothing remains but the dust and ashes spoken of by historians, the fruit retaining all the while its external shape and beauty.

In Southern Persia, particularly near Shiraz, the grape attains great perfection, and ere Mohammed had enforced sobriety, was pressed into wine. Along the chain of the Elburz, through the glens and vales of Mazanderan, all the way to the frontiers of Herat, gardens of rare beauty were once found; but owing to the failure of the springs, as many as four hundred of which have been known to dry up in one year, these paradises have become rare. The country of the Afghans produces nearly all the fruits of Europe, together with many of those of India, so that the bazaars of Peshawar and the Punjab remind you at once of Covent Garden and Calcutta. As you descend

towards the Deccan and Ceylon, both fruits and flowers multiply apace, the former increasing in the richness and delicacy of their flavour, the latter in the splendour and variety of their colours. Creepers extend their arms through the woods, and laden with red, white, or yellow blossoms, climb about the trunks of the loftiest trees, flinging festoons from branch to branch, forming archways across glades, and hanging in pendulous and feathery masses, glowing with all the tints of the rainbow.

Throughout the countries sheltered by the Western Ghauts grows the areca palm, about whose fruit there hang much Hindu poetry and fable. To the people of those lands it supplies the place of tobacco, for the nut being broken and wrapped in a leaf of the betel vine, mixed with a small portion of chunan or shell-lime, is masticated incessantly by the natives of both sexes, who maintain that it strengthens the tone of the stomach, although it destroys the teeth.

To enumerate the fruits of India—the cocoa-nuts, the tamarinds, the bananas, the pine-apples, the figs, the mangoes, the dates—would be endless; but numerous and delicious as they are, the natives, as a rule, prefer the flavour of more northern fruits, especially those of Afghanistan, which are piled up in the bazaars of the Punjab, of Scinde, and generally of all Northern India. Where the soil is hard and gravelly, you behold an abundance of shrubs, covered at the proper season of the year with red, yellow, and scarlet blossoms in tufts; the streams and rivers are fringed with reeds, whose feathery summits appear to be in perpetual motion; while, scattered over the rich plains, are groups of the banyan fig-tree, which, when the fruit is ripe, are crowded with flights of green pigeons and other birds, though, like Pharaoh's figs in Egypt, it is generally neglected by mankind. Passing over to Ceylon, the flowers are innumerable, and the various kinds of fruit little less so. The Dutch, when in possession of the island, appear to have chiefly delighted in its immense cinnamon-gardens, its pearl-fisheries, and its mines of rubies; but with the natives of the East, especially the Arabs, we look upon this famous island—the Serendib of their marvel-loving voyagers—as the favourite abode of Flora. Immediately on landing, the traveller beholds a lofty belt of the *Erythrina*, which, with its profusion of scarlet flowers pendent with long spikes, are said to cast so dazzling a glare upon the waters, as to scare away the fish during the flowering season. From this half-fabulous girdle, the eye follows the upward slope as it rises gradually towards the blue cone which crowns the island, and by the Mohammedans and Europeans is denominated 'Adam's Peak,' from the belief that this was the terrestrial paradise, and that all the riches of the vegetable kingdom attributed to that garden are found here. After the *Erythrina*, the 'Flame of the Woods' most prominently challenges attention. This is a low bushy tree, called *Izora coccinea* by naturalists, covered thickly with brilliant scarlet flowers, which, beheld among the verdure of the surrounding trees, appear to glow and flash like burning coal. Even when beheld singly, the *Izora* is a striking object; but when whole slopes and valleys seem, when viewed from a height, to be carpeted with them, the spectator may almost imagine the face of the country to be on fire. Along with this gorgeous shrub grow the *Ipomoea*, a beautiful climber, which the Hindus love to intertwist about their bowers; the *Mussaenda*, called by the Malays the 'Leaf of the Princess,' because the ladies are fond of the fragrance of its white leaves; and another variety of the same species, which, as Moore assures us, is awake only at night. In reality, however, it opens its white chalice so exactly at four o'clock in the afternoon, that people often plant it in their gardens that they may know how time wears away in cloudy weather. In such a climate, it is no wonder that delicate

flowers, like travellers, should love the night, when the air is balmy than by day, when the forests emit their perfumes, when the moon's effulgence, almost as powerful as the light of a northern sun, is reflected from the polished leaves, as from so many tiny mirrors rustling and glittering in the breeze. Then the *Sandal Malam*, or 'Mistress of the Night,' sheds around its perfume, too soft and exquisite to be commonly appreciated. The Malays compare it to a stray beauty visiting her lover in the night, whose presence is only marked by the cloud of sweetness floating around her.

Properly speaking, the cinnamon-tree is remarkable neither for fruit nor flowers; it is a beautiful laurel, which often attains the height of twenty feet, and grows wild on the sea-shore, in woods, on the slopes of hills; in short, wherever the Pompadour pigeon bears and plants its fruit. The uses of its bark are too well known to need description. The blossoms of the champac, of a rich saffron colour, are, by the Hindus, strewed for their scent over beds and furniture, or interwoven by ladies with their hair, whose blackness is set off by contrast with them. Among the plants of Ceylon, is one which the Dutch call the Can Fruit, and Linnaeus the *Nepenthes destillatoria*; its flower, shaped like a tube, and closed at the end with a circular valve, contains a quantity of limpid water, which runs out when the valve opens in the morning, though it regularly fills again at night, and in some islands of the Indian Archipelago is so large as to contain a full pint. Another vegetable production of Ceylon is the *Musa*, or 'Tree of Knowledge.' It is, in fact, rather a plant than a tree; its leaves, of an elegant green above, and yellow beneath, are larger than those of the banana, and make a rustling noise like paper in the wind.

Proceeding still further eastward, we may be said to be lost in a chaos of fruits and flowers among the islands of the Indian Ocean. Sailing up the White Nile, we occasionally encounter diminutive floating islands, composed of twisted grass, on which a little soil having fallen by accident, is soon covered with a mass of flowers down to the water's edge. In the Oriental Archipelago, considerable islands, rising in the form of a pyramid, have sometimes been compared to large baskets of flowers floating on the waves. In Borneo, in Magindanao, in Palawan, in Celebes, trees and plants and flowers drape the hills and mountains with variegated hues, and yield fruit in a profusion so lavish that science has hitherto failed to name and classify them. Every voyage up a river, every excursion into the woods, reveals some new species or variety.

Cashmere and Kabul produce the *durien*—delicious to the taste, though it cannot be eaten without holding the nose, so fetid is its odour—the almond, the apricot, the peach, the nectarine, the pomegranate, the olive, the citron, and the grape. Parts of Europe are covered thickly with the rich purple flowers of the rhododendron; but in Afghanistan, whole mountains are clothed to their summits with an investiture of wild-roses, which cluster so thickly on the bushes that they nearly conceal the leaves; or with the *Gül Noh Roz*, the 'Flower of the New Year.' When the fruit trees are in blossom, the valleys and eminences about the capital appear to be in a blaze, while the distant hills are wrapped by the anghawan in a mantle of blood-red flowers, intermingled with the narcissus, the zambok or sweet flag, and the *lila* or wild-tulip. In sheltered spots, spring is ushered in by the pink blossoms of the almond-tree, which come before the leaves, and impart a gay aspect to the ravines and hollows. Further north, amid the soft valleys of Sogdiana, and far away by Balkh and Samarcand, the vegetation of Asia develops itself with still more delicate beauty; the flowers are more fragrant, while the fruit is sweeter even than those of Kabul and Istalef. The

unvisited country of Kafferistan is said to resemble Greece both in its inhabitants and its productions; but we must wait till some traveller has dared to penetrate its lofty valleys, before we speculate on what it yields. Enough has been said to convey to the reader some faint idea of the fruits and flowers of the East.

MYSELF AND MY RELATIVES.

CHAPTER XV.

A STRANGE VISITOR.

HOME, home! why did I leave you? Why did I rejoice when on my way to enter upon strange scenes and a new life! Years have rolled by, many, many years, since that time, and much has happened to me of good as well as evil, yet still an exceeding bitter cry, 'Home, home! why did I leave you?' comes up from my heart as I write this record of the past. But I must go on without flinching from things terrible to relate; I must be brave.

All at Ripworth during my illness were most kind to me; Jane Gordon, Mrs Powell, and my uncle paid me every attention that affection could dictate. Had I been mistress of thousands a year, I could not have been treated better than I was. At that time, I felt that I never could be sufficiently grateful for such kindness as I received from my uncle and his household. My mother had not been written to while I was ill: the doctor not having pronounced my case dangerous, Colonel Daubeny did not wish to alarm her; yet it must have seemed strange to all at home that I never answered Anna's request for five pounds till five weeks had elapsed. When able to move from my bedroom, it was Miss Gordon's arm that supported me slowly onwards in my little walks through lobbies and corridors. She behaved towards me with great tenderness. The warmth of my apartment, where large fires burned continually, made me forget that it was already winter, till one morning, on looking out, I saw the ground covered with snow. It reminded me of home and long ago, when I was a child at Weston Cricket, before I knew the struggles of my parents to clothe and feed their family. Now I watched the birds hopping in the snow, and icicles hanging from the tree-branches, thinking of the long gone past all the while. When the recollection of Curzon Goad came to me, I trembled, feeling it would be well, perhaps, for me if no such person had ever existed. Where was he now? Where had he been while I was ill? I was yet too weak to bear much agitation of any kind, and I was therefore satisfied that Miss Gordon never spoke to me of either Mr Legrand or Curzon Goad. Once I asked her if anything remarkable had occurred at Ripworth while I was ill.

'O nothing,' she replied carelessly; 'we kept the house very quiet, and saw no company.'

My strength gradually returned, and at length I was able to go down to the drawing-room. My uncle received me with an ardour that quite surprised me; indeed, I felt so shattered, my spirit so humbled by recent suffering, that when he took my hand fondly in his own, saying: 'My dear girl, I am very happy to see you down here among us again,' I felt ready to shed tears. I had not courage, kind as he seemed, to ask him for a little money to send home to my family; and when a letter reached me from Edward, I read it very nervously.

'MY DEAR JESSIE—Your long silence puzzles us all very much. Our mother fears you are ill; but the rest of us hope you are only too pleasantly occupied at Ripworth to find time for writing. I must say everything at home is most uncomfortable. I know not if things could be better managed, but it appears to me that everything is going topsy-turvy. Mother grows very cross, I think, seldom speaking except to direct the servants; and Anna is occupied continually

now with some trashy old novels from the library at Farmley. I have no one to speak to, so wish most heartily your Ripworth visit was at an end. Bobby amuses himself shooting with old Webb at Thorn Grange—a companionship, I must say, I do not approve of. There seems to be no money here, in spite of Uncle Daubeney's large supplies. To be sure, mother says she had to pay a large bill for Bobby's and my clothes, and our travelling expenses, which, I believe, were not reckoned upon, but still I fear there is mismanagement somewhere. I wonder when I am to get my commission, which you say Uncle Daubeney speaks of procuring. This life of idleness wearies me. Your affectionate brother,

‘EDWARD KEPPLETON.’

It was evening when I got that letter alone in the drawing-room—a dull, gray winter evening—and it was lying on my lap when the door opened, and Mr Legrand entered unannounced. I started, for the apparition was unexpected.

‘I thought the colonel was here,’ he said, when our first greeting was over. ‘I fear I alarmed you, coming in so abruptly.’

‘O no; I am only a little nervous still.’

‘You have been very ill,’ he said, looking at me with a tenderness that seemed to improve the expression of his countenance.

I leaned back on the sofa where I sat, and uttered a very heavy sigh involuntarily; my heart was so oppressed by thoughts of home, that I felt it impossible to conceal my depression of spirits.

‘I have been very ill and very unhappy,’ I said: ‘some news from home has made me sad.’

‘Indeed?’ said Mr Legrand, looking keenly at me. ‘Nothing serious, I hope.’

‘Oh, not very serious, but still unpleasant.’

‘You will not confide in me further; you do not trust me.’

Again that tender, earnest look, that I could scarcely bear, much less return; and yet, if I did return it, might I not save my whole family from misery?

‘Come,’ said he, ‘let me read this letter. I know it is that which has troubled you, and I will give my advice. Who is it from?’

‘My brother.’

‘Oh, he has got into some little scrape—a debt, a love-affair probably?’ and he put his hand on the letter, but I nervously held it, though aware that he had no real intention of reading it. His hand as it touched mine felt of an icy coldness.

‘I am not a young man; I have great experience, Miss Keppleton, and perhaps my counsel might be of use in this little dilemma. Ah! if you knew what scenes I have witnessed in my life!’

‘I fear you could not advise me in this particular case,’ said I, smiling faintly.

‘What is your brother's name? Robert?’ and I fancied Mr Legrand's eyes looked strange.

‘No; Edward. But I have a brother called Robert.’

‘Ah! two brothers? And how many sisters?’

‘Two also.’

‘And then all these young people at home get into little difficulties, and are sometimes unhappy, and you have to fret about them?’

‘Oh, there is much to make me seriously anxious!’ I replied, sinking back again with my letter fast in my hand.

‘Were your troubles ever so serious and varied, I could still be able to give counsel and sympathy. For myself, I have passed through every trial in life. Poverty I have had to battle with, and it entails thousands of misfortunes.’

I am sure I turned pale at these words. I could not speak while he continued: ‘Yes, poverty of the most extreme kind, Miss Keppleton. Out of the furnace I have come now, however. Fortune has smiled on me. One thing alone remains to complete my contentment.’

The old feeling of coquetry could not be overcome. I languidly looked at him, knowing very well what he meant, and said, with incomparable boldness: ‘And what is that?’

He took my hand. Edward's letter was grasped in the other. While thoughts of home, and misery there, filled my soul, I did not withdraw it for a second or two. This might be a decisive moment for my whole family: Let me cast away all selfishness, let me make a life-long sacrifice. Oh! if I had courage for it! While I hesitated, Mr Legrand gently pressed my hand in his.

‘Dear Miss Keppleton,’ he said in a voice low but not unsteady, ‘I have more than once dared to hope that I was not regarded by you with indifference. I may have been deceived; if I was, God help me!’

‘God help me too!’ I inwardly prayed, feeling that the moment was a terrible one, and I had partly brought it wilfully on myself.

‘You do not speak. Say something to give me hope, I entreat of you!’

Bewildered as I was, I saw that my companion was very pale; his large harsh features betrayed singular emotion. I trembled at this frightful crisis. My agitation gave him courage. I felt almost fainting.

‘Pardon me if I have spoken too abruptly,’ he said with much tenderness; ‘you are ill—let me ring.’

‘Stay,’ I gasped; ‘do not ring; I shall be better presently;’ but the words died on my lips, a film stole over my eyes, consciousness entirely abandoned me.

When I recovered, I was lying on the sofa, my uncle standing over me, Miss Gordon chafing my hands. Mr Legrand was gone. The letter which I held in my hand at the moment of fainting lay on the table in its envelope.

‘Let me go to my room,’ I faintly asked, fearful of any explanations that might ensue; and Jane gave me her arm in silence, while my uncle went so far as to press his lips to my forehead—a strange condescension for him. I secured Edward's letter before leaving the room, and then went upstairs.

As yet I was permitted to dine alone at an earlier hour than the rest of the family, and so escaped further excitement that evening. Jane sat a long while with me, and talked gaily of many things, never mentioning either Mr Legrand or his inevitable companion, Curzon Goad. I supposed that the latter had gone to his regiment, and was no longer in the country. For many days after this, I felt very weak, and was permitted to remain quietly alone. Nothing soothed me more than being thus left to myself; yet still I dreaded every day a more formal and formidable proposal from Mr Legrand. One evening, at about six o'clock, I was looking from my window, watching the white moonshine spreading over leafless trees, when I heard the sound of a carriage driving up the avenue. The stillness of the frosty air rendered distant sounds distinctly audible, and it was a long while before the vehicle appeared in view. At last I saw it, as, slackening its pace, the driver drew up before the door. The driver was Curzon Goad. I saw him in the moonlight slowly alighting and throwing the reins to his servant, who took the carriage round to the stables. There was something grave and thoughtful in his air. I watched him as long as he was visible, and then turned from the window with a beating heart. It seemed strange that Jane had not mentioned that he was coming to dinner this evening. I lay down on a couch, feeling rather exhausted. A knock came to the door.

‘Come in,’ said I, and a housemaid entered. She had come to see if my fire wanted replenishing. I asked her if it was near dinner-hour.

‘Not yet, ma'am; Miss Gordon has not gone down to the drawing-room yet.’

‘Is there company this evening?’

‘O no, ma'am—nobody but Mr Goad, and we

don't call him a stranger now: you know he's all as one, ma'am, as part of the family; and she smiled pleasantly.

'Has he dined here often lately?'

'Nearly every other day, ma'am,' replied the girl, looking at me in surprise. The fire was by this time stirred up, and fresh coal piled on, and having asked me if she should light candles, which I said I did not want, the housemaid went away, leaving me there with the moonbeams playing on the carpet, and feeling as if the wintry desolation of outward things had crept into my heart too. Edward's description of home, my mother's cares, the domestic discomfort, all chilled me, while Mr Legrand's last words added to my unhappiness. It seemed to me that I was selfish in the extreme to hesitate about accepting this man, whose fortune might not only place myself in a distinguished position, but render my whole family independent and happy. What could I not do for them as the wife of so wealthy a man? But these reflections only added to my mental agony. Well do I remember that winter evening—Jane was later than usual in coming to sit with me after dinner; and when she did come, I was asleep. She awoke me passing her hand over my forehead.

'Dear Jessie, you must be perished here,' she said with some concern; 'you feel icy.'

'I fell asleep for a few minutes,' I said, raising my head. 'Light the candles, please.'

She lit them, and then I saw how well she looked dressed in a pale-blue silk, her fair hair twined round her head in a shining crown of plaits. I dared not ask her about the guest who was below; I only dreaded that she would speak of him herself. She did not, however, neither did she remain long in the room; she seemed a little excited, as though her thoughts were absent from what concerned me—but still she was in unusually high spirits. When she left me, I heard her singing snatches of a gay air while descending to the drawing-room. She did not return to me any more that night. Purcell made my tea, and I retired early to bed, as was my custom at this time. A few days after, Uncle Daubeney, Mrs Powell, and Miss Gordon went to pay a visit; they were not to return for a few days. They apologised to me for thus leaving me, but that was not necessary, as my state of health gave no grounds for apprehension of a relapse, and Purcell promised me every attention. I was glad to be solitary, and I spent my time in reading and music, or in making copies of drawings. One day while I was sitting thus alone in the front drawing-room, a servant entered, and told me that a gentleman wished to see me.

'A gentleman? Who is he? Did he not send up his name?' I asked, feeling rather faint.

'No, ma'am; he gave no name: he is an old gentleman, ma'am.'

'Shew him up,' said I, with a feeling of relief, yet still disturbed in mind. Could it be Mr Horne?

After a short delay, the visitor appeared before me—a strangely withered man, of diminutive size, with scores of wrinkles seaming his face; his hair was white as snow, and very scanty; his garments were somewhat old-fashioned and rather shabby; but there was a look of authority in his small deep-set eye, and an air of consequence in his gait, that forbade the idea that he was any supplicant for aid. I arose as he entered, and made a slight courtesy; he remained standing for a few seconds in the centre of the room, regarding me with scrutiny.

'Are you Miss Keppleton?' he asked in a harsh strange voice, that I seemed to have heard before, either in a dream or long ago. It sounded like the rusty creaking of an old gate unused to being opened.

'Yes,' replied I, smiling as graciously as I could.

'I have heard of you, and I wanted to see you,' he continued in a business-like way, sitting down opposite

to me. 'You are Colonel Daubeney's niece, and you live at Weston Cricket, in —shire; yes, I know. And now, will you tell me who it is that Mr Curzon Goad, of the — dragons, is going to marry in this house?'

'No one that I know of,' I replied, colouring I am sure.

The old man looked most comical.

'No one! and yet he is here nearly every day! That is mighty likely. No one!'

'I assure you I am not aware of his being about to marry anybody, here or elsewhere.'

'He isn't going to marry yourself, I suppose?'

persisted the old man.

I shook my head decidedly, too much amused to feel annoyed.

'Then it must be Miss Gordon; yet if he had good taste, he would not have overlooked you—no, he would not; but perhaps you were too wise to encourage him, or perhaps you had not money enough for him; that's it, I suspect. Mr Goad can be prudent now and then; I have known him to be rational once or twice in his life.'

'You seem to be well acquainted with him,' said I, smiling in spite of myself.

'Yes, very well acquainted indeed. I have been intimate with him since he didn't know his alphabet, and could hardly ask for his bread and butter—long before he knew how to laugh at an old man, or make a fool of a young woman. Oh, I know a great deal about his character.'

'I hope it is a good one,' said I.

'Oh, not so very good either. I do not approve of young men or women who spend their money on vanity, waste their friends' money too, and then trust to making their fortune over again by marrying somebody that has got plenty of gold. I look upon it as dishonourable, because the man or woman that does so must tell lies; they must pretend to love the people they marry, when they don't care a farthing for them. No man ever yet said: "My dear Mary, I am going to marry you because you are rich, and I want money to keep me out of jail;" nor no woman ever said: "I intend to marry you, Mr So-and-so, because I want to be rich, and have fine carriages and dresses, and would sell myself to any man for wealth." Do you see that?' and the old man looked over at me with his sharp, wonderful eye. 'You haven't a fortune yourself, young lady? No, your father was poor, and he ran off with your mother from Ripworth; I know all about that too, and how the Daubenies never took notice of him or her afterwards—kind people they were! But what in the world made Mortimer Daubeney, the worst of the lot, ask his poor niece here?'

This was getting too impertinent. I felt angry, and no doubt I looked so.

'Oh, never grow vexed at what a blunt old man of eighty says. Age gives privileges. Unless some marvellous good-fortune has happened lately to your family, you must be very poor. Now, you need not colour up so; it isn't your fault if you have little money. There's no harm in poverty—nothing at all to blush for.'

'My uncle, Colonel Daubeney, is from home,' said I with dignity, as a hint for my strange visitor to depart.

'I know that very well: if he was here, I wouldn't come. Do you know who I am?'

'No; I have not that pleasure.'

'Well, answer me one more question. Do the people here think that Curzon Goad will get all his uncle's property?'

'I believe that is the general impression.'

'And it makes the young fellow of great consequence, no doubt; puffs him up with what I hate above all things—pride. You have heard of the old niggard—the whimsical, tyrannical, old Birmingham Newdegate?'

'I have heard of Mr Newdegate of Harkalowe certainly.'

'And now you see him,' said the old man, leaning his elbows on the table as he bent over to look more closely at me. 'I am Birmingham Newdegate.'

'Indeed?' said I, getting good-humoured again, and feeling much surprised.

'Yes, most truly. No doubt you have heard the name often enough.'

'I have heard of you, of course, from Mr Legrand and Mr Goad.'

'From nobody else?' he asked with a keen look.

'I have heard you occasionally spoken of at Ripworth.'

'Nowhere else?'

'Decidedly not.'

'Do you mean to say you have never heard the name of Newdegate spoken of with abhorrence; that nobody has cursed it as belonging to a knave and a rascal?'

I replied in the affirmative, feeling rather alarmed for my companion's senses, assuring him that I had never heard of him except as Mr Goad's uncle.

'Great God, how strange!' he murmured, his face twitching curiously. 'Look here,' he said, drawing from his pocket a small pistol; 'I carry arms with me everywhere now. Do not be alarmed: women are always such cowards. But I have a great dread of treachery; I trust nobody.'

'You are quite right,' said I, feeling a mortal fear.

'A pistol, however, can give no security against poison. You see I am completely at the mercy of hirelings. I am a lonely old man, no wife, no daughter—ah! if I had a daughter like you, or a grand-daughter!' he murmured as if to himself. 'I wish Curzon would marry you. I don't like the description of Miss Gordon. But I see you want to get rid of me. Let me give you a little advice before I go. If you are proud, learn humility; if it ever happens that you are a wealthy woman, be careful to use your riches well. I saw you once before, but I will never see you again. I am glad you have heard so little of me. Good-day, young lady. Don't ring; I'll let myself out. I came in a hired carriage, and it waits for me outside the east gate. Nobody here knows me; and I wish you not to mention to any one that I paid you this visit; I have had my own reasons for it.'

He gave me his hand, and then disappeared with a brisk air, leaving me very much surprised indeed. Yet I thought his visit did me good: it roused me from my low nervous state. I wrote to my mother that day, asking her to tell me plainly all that Mr Horne had said of Curzon Goad's misdemeanours. I also wrote to Edward; and the day being sunshiny, though cold, I walked out in the grounds. Next day, Colonel Daubeny and Jane returned to Ripworth, bringing with them some young-lady friends for the Christmas. My boy-cousins also arrived for vacation. The house was full, and I felt almost as well as ever. Mr Legrand was in London, and Curzon Goad there also. Their absence pleased me. We had pleasant drives every day, in spite of the cold weather, and I was flattered at the compliments the Misses Caulfield, Jane's friends, frequently paid me. They were innocent, light-hearted girls, free from any envy or malice.

'Will you stay for Jane's wedding?' asked the younger one when we were alone one day.

The question made my heart sink.

'I don't know,' I replied. 'She will not be married for some time, I suppose.'

'I thought it was to be immediately,' said Mary Caulfield: 'she has asked us to return early next month for the wedding.'

I made no reply. It was evident that Jane was more confidential with these friends than she was with me. I dared not question her relative to her marriage; I did not like to think of it.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN UNEXPECTED DECLARATION.

The time came when I was formally told of it. Jane herself was my informant; she seemed very happy, too happy, perhaps, to notice how pale I grew when I heard the news. Pardon me, reader, when I say that I cried all that night instead of sleeping. Never had I felt more wretched. There had been moments when I thought Curzon Goad had transferred his attentions from Miss Gordon to myself—moments when I dared to hope he regarded me with more than a passing admiration—but now, that was all over. For some hours, my mental agony was intense; it subsided into a dreary calm. But I was determined not to be vanquished. I entered into the Christmas gaieties of the neighbourhood with an affectation of spirit rather overdrawn.

'Do you really enjoy dancing so much as you seem to do?' asked Miss Milner one evening, at Lady Vignolles'. 'Excuse me, but I should imagine you were capable of appreciating something deeper, more serious, than a constant round of gaiety.'

'I fear you are too kind,' I replied. 'I am a sad creature of frivolity.'

'Well, my dear girl, perhaps it is as well for you to enjoy yourself now; the time will come when a scene like this to-night may be rather painful than pleasant.'

Little did she know how painful it was at that moment. Miss Milner was of a literary turn of mind, a little eccentric, but most benevolent. She often told me of the quiet secluded life she led at her own residence in —shire, evidently wishing to inspire me with a love of peace and solitude. But she argued in vain. Nothing at present would have pleased me more than to rush into a whirlpool of London gaiety, where I might shut out thought and memory.

The time of real trial came when Mr Goad was expected at Ripworth, in the character of *fiancé*. I tried to meet him with something of warmth in my manner, yet I could not help thinking that he was cold to myself. He did not appear in very high spirits certainly: his attentions to Jane were quiet, and I was glad to perceive that he seemed to have lost the careless levity that had often characterised his conversation. Something of the old boyish look, long ago, was in the expression of his face now. I wondered how the thought of marriage had sobered him. There was no company at Ripworth at this time; the Caulfields had gone away, and the house was quiet. Jane used to ask me to accompany her and her betrothed in their walks, but I often declined going—partly because I felt I must only be *de trop*—partly because it gave me no pleasure.

One day news came that old Mr Newdegate was very ill, and Mr Goad hurried at once to Harkalowe. The messenger who brought these tidings also stated that a telegraphic message had been sent to London for Mr Legrand, according to the sick man's wish. There was a good deal of excitement at Ripworth. People scarcely pretended to be sorry that Mr Newdegate was likely to depart this life; even the servants speculated on the destination of his large property, as if he were already dead. Young as I was to the world, I felt considerably shocked at the way the old man was spoken of. Curzon Goad alone looked concerned when he heard of his illness. He did not return for many days to Ripworth, but messengers were despatched from him every day stating how affairs went. Mr Legrand had arrived speedily at Harkalowe, and was reported to be in constant attendance at the sick-bed. A week elapsed, and then the finale—Mr Newdegate was dead. I could not help remarking how red, and then pale, my uncle grew when he heard the news. He caught my eye as I watched him, and I thought he seemed confused.

'This will cause a delay about Jane's marriage,' said Mrs Powell.

'Yes, of course. Poor old man, he had a long life. I think I shall ride over to Harkslowe to-day.'

'You had better. It is as well to know quickly how he has settled his affairs.'

'Legrand has been very kind to him; such attention speaks well for him.'

'People are generally kind to the rich,' observed Mrs Powell quietly.

'Legrand is an honourable man,' said my uncle emphatically, looking at me.

I said nothing; my thoughts were principally occupied with the strange visit Mr Newdegate had paid me so short a time ago. Weird and unearthly as he looked then, I might have almost fancied it was his wraith which had appeared to me. Why had the old man, who rarely left his own house, taken the trouble of driving secretly seven miles to see me?

My uncle went to Harkslowe in the afternoon, and did not return till the funeral was over. When he came, he brought strange news. The will had been read, and with the exception of a few trifling legacies, the largest of which was seven thousand pounds, bequeathed to Curzon Goad, the whole of Mr Newdegate's large property was left to Mr Legrand!

Jane turned very pale when she heard this intelligence; Mrs Powell burst into a fury, abusing the dead man and Mr Legrand with vehemence; she even went so far as to hint at foul play, but here my uncle stopped her. He was agitated too, but not unpleasantly so. I could not help fancying that he did not grudge Mr Legrand his good-fortune.

'I know Legrand will act uprightly,' he said; 'he has promised as much. The worst of it is, young Goad seems hurt about the will, and refuses any offer of an addition to his legacy. He seems to consider that his uncle used him very ill.'

'He is right,' said Mrs Powell. 'I have never heard of anything more treacherous.'

'It is certainly curious that Mr Legrand has been left so much,' observed I.

'Fshaw!' said my uncle contemptuously, 'what do girls of your age know of such affairs?'

I was startled at being thus addressed. The tone of Colonel Daubeney's voice, and his expression of face, were unlike anything I had ever heard or seen of him before. I felt offended, although allowances might certainly be made for the perturbation of his mind at this crisis. I pitied Jane very much, for her disappointment must have been great, although her own fortune was considerable. As to Mr Goad, I could not help thinking he did not deserve his uncle's property. The way I had heard him mentioned by the old man, and Mr Horne's account of him latterly, gave me no reason to think that he was to be Mr Newdegate's sole heir. At first, everybody pitied Curzon, but after a little time, opinions changed. Rumours were afloat that he and his uncle had many unhappy disputes latterly. Mr Newdegate's confidential lawyer hinted that Mr Goad's conduct had not altogether been what it should have been. The steward at Harkslowe shook his head solemnly, murmuring that he wished to say nothing, thereby letting it be understood that there was a good deal of an unpleasant nature to speak of, if he had so willed. Jane remained in her room for several days, saying she had a cold; and Mr Goad came pretty often to Ripworth, though his visits seemed chiefly on business. I was told by a housemaid that he and Mr Legrand had quarrelled deeply, although the latter was acting in every way like the most honourable of gentlemen. All the servants at Harkslowe were loud in their praises of him. The house at Ripworth was very gloomy now; my uncle maintained a sullen air, and was often quite rude to myself. A great change had certainly taken place in his demeanour towards me. I began to think seriously of going home. One evening, while sitting alone in the library, I was

surprised by Mr Goad entering. He looked paler than ever, and much agitated.

'I have come to say good-by, Miss Keppleton,' he said approaching me. 'I leave Ripworth at once, perhaps never to return.'

'How? What has happened?'

'You remember my telling you, some months ago, that I was a fettered man? Now I am free. Colonel Daubeney has informed me that, from prudential motives, he cannot encourage me to think further of marrying Miss Gordon. The lady herself agrees with him, and of course I resign all pretensions to her hand. It is scarcely six weeks since he asked me formally if I intended to propose for Miss Gordon, letting me understand that I had engaged her affections irrevocably.'

A slight smile curled his lip as he spoke this last sentence.

'Affairs have changed since that time,' he continued; 'I am only a poor man now, instead of the heir of a wealthy uncle, and so my lady-love gives me up.'

'Miss Gordon, no doubt, follows Colonel Daubeney's advice,' said I.

'She is nearly of age; surely she could judge for herself; but perhaps she is right. Indeed, I never thought she really cared for me till the colonel told me so. We had a flirtation certainly, and it was possible that she might have believed my attentions were more serious than was really the case.'

'Did you really not love her?'

'I asked in surprise. 'I believed she loved me,' was his reply.

'But how could you think of marrying a person you did not care for?'

'I asked rather indignantly. 'It is often done. I wanted money. I was in difficulties, and this heiress encouraged me. I delayed proposing till called to account by the colonel, and then I offered myself, and was accepted. Now I am rejected, and I feel relief.'

This sounded very like *pique*. I felt a little annoyed, for Jane's sake.

'And so you leave Ripworth this evening?'

'Yes; as soon as this interview closes. Pardon me, if I ask you one question: Are you engaged to Lucien Legrand?'

'Engaged? No.'

'But you will be. Nevertheless, I will say to you what I think of him: he is a scoundrel of the blackest dye, to be matched in villainy by few who will escape the gallows.'

'Perhaps you wrong him. Mr Newdegate had strange fancies, had he not?'

'Strange things were told him, I have no doubt. There is one thing that particularly surprises me. My uncle, a few weeks before his death, told me himself that he had a bundle of papers in his desk which he wished me to read as soon as he died, and he even shewed them to me tied up with tape. Now these papers are altogether missing, though he said they were of the utmost importance to many people.'

'That is strange; but perhaps they were lost in the confusion of looking for the will.'

'The will was in the lawyer's hands, and there were scarcely any papers but those I allude to. Mr Newdegate burned all his letters before his illness.'

There was a short time of silence now, during which I felt puzzled to know what to say.

'Do not imagine that I considered I was at all entitled to my uncle's property; from many things he said to myself, I concluded he never meant me to be his sole heir; but I cannot help regretting that he should have been led to regard me with less affection than formerly by people whom I thought were friends rather than enemies,' continued the young man rather bitterly. 'However, it is all over now. I have still a confession to make, and as you are not yet engaged to Mr Legrand, you will pardon me for it. Miss Keppleton, may I speak further?'

I became wildly nervous. Was he about to make me a declaration of love? Yes. He told me, in a hurried, agitated way, that he had admired me since he first saw me at Lady Vignolles' ball, though we were not introduced till a subsequent meeting at Ripworth. He seemed to speak without entertaining a hope that my sentiments could be favourable to him.

'I am going away, perhaps for ever, from this part of the world,' he said, 'yet I must still open my heart to you. As the wife of Lucien Legrand, from henceforth you must be a stranger to me. He and I will never speak again. He is my enemy.'

'I will never marry Mr Legrand,' I said firmly, gaining courage from his agitation. 'Were he to propose to-morrow, I would reject him.'

'And yet every one has told me that you were sure to marry him. Thank God that you will escape such a doom! One question more—May I write to you?'

He gave me his hand as he spoke, and I murmured a faint, 'Yes.' In a moment, he was gone.

THE LAND'S END.

THAT time is now fast drawing nigh, at which all London—with the exception of some two million of its inhabitants, whose poverty forbids—flees from the great oven of brick and mortar, the walls that wink with heat, the stones that burn the foot-soles, and pours into the pleasant fields. Some put the sea between them and the scene of their late toils, as though it were a dun; some, of a scientific turn, descend coal-mines; others climb mountains, previously supposed to be inaccessible except to the chamois. 'Away, away, and as far away as possible,' is the universal cry. Under these circumstances, we know no better place to which to betake one's self than the Land's End, and—despite French treaties, church-rates, and all other causes which set our political Cassandra prophesying—may we never see the end of England in any other sense! What completer change from the Strand, W.C., can there be than the Strand, West Cornwall, or from the tide of men that flows and ebbs in that great thoroughfare twice a day, to the surging sea? 'At the Land's End,' says the great prose poet of England, speaking of Turner's picture of that wondrous spot, 'there is to be seen the entire disorder of the surges, when every one of them, divided and entangled among promontories as it rolls, and beaten back post by post from walls of rock on this side and on that side, recoils, like the defeated division of a great army, throwing all behind it in disorder, breaking up the succeeding waves into vertical ridges, which, in their turn, yet more totally shattered upon this shore, retire in more hopeless confusion, until the whole surface of the sea becomes one dizzy whirl of rushing, writhing, tortured, undirected rage, bounding, and crashing, and coiling in an anarchy of enormous power, subdivided into myriads of waves, of which every one is not, be it remembered, a separate surge, but part and portion of a vast one, actuated by eternal power, and giving in every direction the mighty undulation of impetuous line, which glides over the rocks and writhes in the wind, overwhelming the one, and piercing the other with the form, fury, and fleetness of a sheet of lambent fire.' The whole of that West Cornwall coast, indeed, exhibits the grandest coast-scenes that England has to offer. Weird rocks, jutting out to sea from cliffs of granite, or islanded amid the tossing foam, which, looked at from a hundred points of view, present from each a different shape, but all grotesque and strange: the 'Armed Knight' (An Marogeth Arrowwed, as Cornish men have for centuries termed it); the 'island with soil upon it' (Eysa Dodnan); that called 'the Irish Lady,' so strangely like a giant female form—and a whole archipelago of others. When tradition (as rarely happens) fails to invest

these rocks with some awful interest, a shipwreck is seldom wanting to hallow the spot with more real and recent terrors. Upon that 'Lady's Rock,' for instance, if no fair woman found protection (and petrification), escaping from some Cornish giant, an Irish female passenger was certainly seen clinging, when all the rest of the ship's company had perished in the waves; nay, even now is seen on moonlit nights, and with a rose (which one would think should be a shamrock, but that perhaps she has had enough of real rocks) in her mouth, as many a fisherman is prepared to testify.

Mr Blight, from whose *Week at the Land's End** we derive much of our information, narrates many a story of shipwreck, not traditional, alas! but of to-day and yesterday; for the spars of many a goodly fleet have crashed and splintered against that iron-bound coast, and will do so, so long as the north-west winds shall blow. Into the very Lion's Den cavern—for the cliffs are tunnelled by the ceaseless wave as by an auger—a vessel was driven, some years ago, with twenty-five men in it, of whom only four were saved. 'Two were found locked in each other's arms, and were said to have been friends who had passed through many dangers together; during the war, they had been imprisoned in France, and in company effected their escape. As they were found, so were they laid together under the turf on the cliff. One poor fellow was discovered beneath a great boulder, which the efforts of several men could not move, but which the sea, in its violence, had rattled about as a mere pebble. Portions of the wreck were floated into Nangizel, close by, and the boom of the vessel was thrown up and lodged, standing on its end, on a ledge in the face of the cliff, thirty feet above high-water mark.'

On the Brison Rocks—which stand, some sixty feet high, a mile to the south-west of Cape Cornwall—a melancholy wreck took place some ten years back, when the sea was so furious that nothing could approach the poor creatures upon them, who were at last all swept off, save one, after remaining for two days, in the sight of hundreds of people. That one—the captain—was rescued, at great personal risk, by the Cornishmen, whose fearless conduct on such occasions cannot be exceeded. And, indeed, without great courage, they could never prosecute, on such a coast, their profession as fishermen. It is a fine sight, upon a summer evening, to look down on a fleet of sixty or seventy boats, creeping away with their rich brown sails, out for the night's fishing. 'If pilchards are to be caught, the drift-nets, one end being fastened to the boat, are thrown overboard in the dusk of the evening, and left to float with the tide; no sails are set, except during very calm weather, to prevent the nets being folded together. The fish are not enclosed in a circle, but are caught in the meshes, which being large enough to admit their heads, detain them by the gills when attempting to draw themselves back. By this mode of fishing, from five to ten thousand is considered a moderate catch for one night; as many as twenty thousand are sometimes taken. In 1851, there was a most extraordinary catch at St Ives; one net alone was supposed to contain 16,500,000, or 5500 hogsheads, weighing 1100 tons. The probable value was £11,000, reckoning them at the usual price of £2 per hogshead, before deducting expense of curing.' But there is a reverse side to this picture of prosperity; and sometimes when the sudden storm comes on, even the usual device of constructing a raft of all the loose spars and timber on board, and putting it out at the bow, to prevent the waves from filling the fishing-boat, is unavailing, and the wives and children at home are left desolate. These misfortunes, however, are rare, and the Cornish boats ride out tempests in which larger vessels perish. Nor was it long since a

* *A Week at the Land's End.* By J. T. Blight. Longmans.

crew of five men undertook a voyage to Australia in one of them, which they safely and rapidly performed, taking the mail from the Cape of Good Hope.

Grand and solemn as is the Cornish coast-line, and abounding in modern incident and ancient legend, the inland sights are not less interesting and peculiar to that region. In one spot, one finds the ruins of some ancient amphitheatre—Plananguares, 'places of amusement,' as they were called—of more than a hundred feet in diameter, and with six rows of seats running round the sides; in another, one comes upon enormous cairns, bright with moss and lichen, but almost as ancient as the earth itself; in another, upon Druidical circles, where rites which make one shudder to think upon have been performed ages ago, under the same warm sun and summer sky. Near these, perhaps, will be still found the fir-club moss, that by the Druids was held in equal reverence with the mistletoe. It was not to be touched or cut with iron, which was considered too base a metal; nor was the bare hand thought worthy of that honour, but a peculiar vesture or sagus applied by means of the right hand. The vesture must have been holy, and taken off some sacred person privately, and with the left hand only. The gatherer was to have his feet naked, being previously washed in pure water, and he was to be clothed in a white garment. He was to offer a sacrifice of bread and wine before proceeding to gather it, and it was to be carried from the place of its nativity in a clean new napkin. It was preserved as a charm against all misfortunes, and fumigation with it was thought good for the eyes. Altogether, a good deal of fuss was made in Cornwall about fir-club moss.

In another place, and, indeed, almost everywhere in this locality, one meets with enormous Logan (that is, logging) stones at the top of some eminence, rocking with an infant's touch, and poised as it were upon a pebble. The Logan Rock, which the foolish lieutenant and his men knocked down, and were compelled by the Admiralty to set up again in the same delicate position—a feat which, for 'all the king's horses and all the king's men,' would seem as impossible as the restoration of Humpty Dumpty—weighs between sixty and seventy tons. This rocking-stone is supposed by some antiquaries to have been used by the Druids to impose upon the people, 'as possessing the peculiar virtue of testing the guilt or innocence of persons accused of crime.

It moves obsequious to the gentlest touch
Of him whose breast is pure; but to a traitor,
Though even a giant's prowess nerved his arm,
It stands as fixed as Snowdon.

The rock-basins, rounded hollows on the surface of granite rocks on the same pile, are also pointed out as shewing that the Druids had some connection with the spot. Dr Borlase imagined that the rain and snow water caught in these vessels was used for lustration and purification; and that by the quantity, colour, motion, and other appearances, the priests judged of future events and dubious cases. These basins may be seen on almost all the high granite cairns in Cornwall.

The harvest customs of this out-of-the-world county—which, however, in these railway-days, is the main producer of the early vegetables sold in London—are peculiar to itself. The labourers erect 'windmills,' formed of sheaves built up in the fields into regular solid cones, about twelve feet high, the heads of the stalks turned inward, and the top capped by a sheaf of reed or corn inverted. Again, walking through the fields during the close of harvest, a stranger is surprised to hear loud shouts, and to see the reapers waving their hands while one holds up a handful of wheat—the last handful of the harvest. This is called 'cutting the neck.' In ancient days, the neck was interwoven with flowers, and dedicated to the goddess of harvest. The simple legends that hang

around this district are in harmony with its antiquity and homeliness. The chad is by the fishermen called chuck-cheeld (that is, choke-child), upon the authority of no less a person than St Levan. It is recorded of that holy man, that he caught only one fish *per diem*, which served for his sustenance—and if it had always been a salmon, he would not need to have been pitted upon that account; but it was sometimes not a salmon. Whilst dwelling in seclusion, he is surprised by an unexpected visit from his sister and her child. To entertain them, he proceeds to his fishing-station, throws out the line, and presently draws up a fish—a chad. As he had visitors, this was not considered dainty enough; so it is thrown back into the water. A second time is the line cast forth, and behold the same fish is caught. It is again thrown into the sea. And now the saint changed his position to another rock, and threw the line still further out. Lo, what is his surprise when the same fish again presents itself! Then the saint thought the hand of Providence was concerned in the matter, and he bore his catch away. It is cooked and placed before the guests, but, sad to relate, the child was choked by the first mouthful. Then was the holy man much grieved, and repented that he had given way to the temptation of the fish, which, he now doubted not, was possessed by an evil spirit. Yet he believed if he had been content with it the first time, the melancholy accident would not have happened, but that it was a punishment for not accepting gratefully what Providence had appointed for him. And from that time, the fishermen in that locality have called the chad 'chuck-cheeld.' One would like to have heard such stories as these in their original Cornish, with a running translation; but except in the names of persons and places, the ancient language is quite lost. Old Dolly Pentreath, of Mousehole, who died in 1778, at the age of 102, was said to have been the last who conversed in Cornish; and a granite obelisk was set up to her memory in St Paul's, by Prince Lucien Bonaparte, while engaged in his study of the dialects of England.

The most interesting spot, of course, of all the county is the Land's End itself, to the antiquary, to the geologist, to the admirer of nature, and to the mere seeker of excitement, who regards with awe the steep smooth turf—with a precipice at the end of it—down which the two dragoons rode in safety, and up which, in endeavouring to ride, a third thus came to grief. 'I had not proceeded far, when my mare, a very spirited animal, became unruly, in consequence of the girths of the saddle slipping back, and she began to kick and plunge, inclining to the precipice upon the right. Although in imminent danger, I did not, happily, lose my presence of mind, and I threw myself off when not more than four feet from the edge of the cliff. Mine was a hussar-saddle, and the bridle having a whip at the end of it, I threw it over the horse's head, and was able to keep hold of it, and to check her, so as to prevent her kicking me. When she turned with her back to the cliff, I let her go, and she fell down, and was dashed to pieces, leaving me on the ground close to the edge of the cliff. A person went down in a basket, and brought up the shattered saddle and bridle, which a saddler at Penzance begged me to give him, that he might hang it at the door of his shop.' The mark of the horse's feet was for a long time after kept cleared out and shewn to visitors.

But the chief interest of this awful spot to the lover of poetry and legend is the Land of Lyonesse, where

All day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains, by the winter sea,
Till all King Arthur's table, man by man,

had fallen

Around their lord, King Arthur.

It lies immediately beneath, and once, it is said,

connected this promontory with the Scilly Isles, nearly thirty miles away. The period at which such a great inundation occurred must have been very remote indeed, and the tradition hangs over the sea like a mist that can neither be grasped nor penetrated. We are to believe that it was a fair and beautiful land, possessing no less than one hundred and forty churches, all by one terrible convulsion swept away for ever. Fishermen, in recent times, are reported to have brought up doors and windows from the submerged territory: and the Trevillian family bear for their arms a horse issuing out of the sea, in memory of one of their ancestors, who swam on shore on horseback during the inundation.

Surely a district haunted by such traditions as these is well worth visiting; and we have to thank Mr Blight for having placed before us its advantages so pleasantly.

VOLCANOES.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

SUBLIME and terrible as many of the operations of nature are, there is probably none of them which can at all compare, for grandeur and awful magnificence, with the phenomena presented by a burning mountain in full eruption. The tremendous roaring of the volcano—the lurid flame-like glare reflected on the vapour above the crater from the lava contained within its depths—the casting forth of huge rocks, often to a distance of many miles, by the explosive power of confined gases—the showers of ashes, and consequent darkness, with vivid flashes of lightning ever illuminating the gloom—and, finally, the outpouring of a vast river of molten rock, often several hundred feet broad and many miles in length: all combine to render such a spectacle the most sublime and terrible ever presented to the gaze of man, and which, once beheld, can never be erased from the memory of the spectator. Terrible as are the consequences sometimes resulting from these occurrences, we are yet not to regard them as being agencies established and brought into operation with a view to destruction, but rather as one link in the chain of reparative and conservative agencies by which the ultimate stability of the system of our world is maintained; reparative, inasmuch as they partly compensate by the formation of land for that which is lost by the destructive action of running water; and conservative, inasmuch as they act to a certain degree as safety-valves for the escape of subterranean heat and gases generated beneath the earth's surface, which would otherwise produce results less awful and terrible, no doubt, to the view of the spectator, but far more disastrous to mankind. The relation between earthquakes and volcanoes is of a very intimate nature; and it is always observed in countries liable to these visitations, that the earthquakes are more severe and continuous before the eruption, and that when the subterranean forces find relief by a volcanic vent, the earthquake shocks decrease, or even cease altogether; hence the inhabitants of such districts, if earthquake shocks have been numerous for some time, always hail with joy the outburst of an eruption, as the earthquake is by far the more destructive agent.

There are remarkable differences between volcanoes as regards the periods of their activity and repose, and also the nature of the matters ejected by them. Some are always in a state of activity, as in Europe, Stromboli, and in South America, the volcano of Nicaragua; others, again, are only occasionally in a state of eruption, and during intermediate periods emit gases and vapours only. Some, again, as in the island of Java, pour out merely mud and water; while others have never, within the records of man,

been known to emit anything except gases, as the volcanoes of Quito. Etna has been in a state of activity, and occasionally of eruption, since the period of the earliest writings of antiquity, having been mentioned as a volcanic mountain in the *Odyssey*, and, indeed, Diodorus Siculus speaks of an eruption which occurred before the Trojan war, now more than 3000 years ago. Vesuvius, on the other hand, was active before the records of history, but seems to have been perfectly quiescent even from the earliest times of tradition down to the age of Pliny, the first recorded eruption being that of 79 A.D., in which that distinguished philosopher lost his life. During this period, however, the volcanoes of Ischia, an island forming one of the arms of the Bay of Naples, were in full activity; while, on the Vesuvian vent being again opened, these volcanoes remained inactive for a period of seventeen centuries. These, and the other volcanoes near Naples, belong to the same volcanic district; so that, although no direct communication exists between them, yet the eruption of the one acts as a safety-valve to the forces of the other.

It would seem also that, previous to a volcano becoming extinct, it ceases to pour out lava, and evolves gases only during the later periods of its existence. This appears to have been the case in the extinct volcanoes of the Eifel in Germany, for the sides of the vents bear no marks of having been subjected to the effects of heat, though evidently much torn by the gaseous explosions, which may have removed those portions of rock which bore the marks of the outpouring of lava. It is possible, also, that some of the South American volcanoes, as those of Quito, which do not now pour out lava, may be in process of extinction; and, indeed, large portions of this chain appear already to have become extinct, no signs of activity having been manifested by them, nor any earthquakes having occurred in their districts, since the discovery of the country. This, however, having taken place only about three centuries ago, would not afford us any very determinate data from which to infer the extinction of these volcanoes, judging merely from their quiescence during this lapse of time, since it appears that the Ischian volcanoes, as mentioned above, resumed their activity after having slumbered for about seventeen centuries. However, there were other vents open during that period in the same district, and earthquakes also were of frequent occurrence, so that it was evident that the volcanic agency had not deserted the district; whereas, in the districts of the South American chain, in which the craters seem to be in repose, the quiescence, as far as we know, appears to be complete. These districts of apparently extinct volcanoes in the Andes are, first, that comprised between latitude 30° and 21° south, on both sides of which is found an active district, one extending at least thirteen degrees southwards to the island of Chiloe, and the other extending six degrees northwards through Bolivia and Southern Peru. Next comes another quiescent district, comprising fourteen degrees of latitude, till we arrive at Quito, which is the commencement of a short chain of active volcanoes extending about three degrees northwards, and crossed by the equator. Another quiescent district comprising six degrees succeeds, and we then arrive at the volcanoes of Central America and Mexico, in which some eruptions on a very grand scale have taken place since the discovery of the country.

To what changes in the interior of the earth may be owing the extinction of the volcanoes of any particular region, is not known; but geology testifies that similar changes have occurred from remote periods of the earth's history; that volcanoes have broken out in regions where previously all had been in repose, and after having continued in a state of activity, or of alternate activity and rest, for a long course of ages, have again become extinct, and have shewn no tendency

during many successive epochs to a renewal of their ancient fires. Many portions of our own islands were formerly the scene of volcanic action, which has now long ceased; and the basalt poured out by the eruptions may be found in many districts, the most remarkable developments of it being in the renowned island of Staffa, and at the no less renowned Giants' Causeway. Indeed, the basalt can be traced extending in a linear direction from Fair Head, in the county Antrim, along the whole coast, through the islands of Rathlin (from whence it extends eastward to Ailsa), Staffa, Skye, and others of the Hebrides, and also on the mainland at Morven, in Argyleshire. In Auvergne and Cantal, also in Central France, and in the district of the Eifel, on the banks of the Rhine near Coblenz, are most interesting regions of extinct volcanoes; the eruptions of those in Auvergne appearing to have commenced during the period termed by geologists the Upper Eocene—a period comparatively recent in the earth's history—and to have continued down as late as the Pliocene epoch, or that preceding the creation of man by but a single intervening period.

The tendency above alluded to of volcanic vents to arrange themselves in a linear direction, is very well marked, and often a perfect mountain-chain is thus formed, as in the Andes above mentioned. Another marked feature in connection with their position is, that in general they are found near the sea, or some large body of water; and indeed this fact is generally considered to have an intimate relation to the theory of volcanoes. We are struck with their remarkable development along all the borders of the Pacific Ocean—that vast tract of sea, which nearly everywhere shews signs of the subsidence of its bottom, and throughout nearly the entire extent of which there is now in process of deposit a chalk formation, compared with which that of the present geological series, vast as it is, will sink into insignificance.

There can be no doubt that the volcanoes of Tierra del Fuego belong to the same series as those of Peru and Chili, since the same chain of mountains is found to extend to the extremity of the continent through Patagonia. In a northerly direction, this chain appears to give off a branch at Quito, which is continued in a north-easterly direction through the volcano of Zamba, at the mouth of the river Madalena, into the West India Islands. In these islands we find two parallel series, the one lying westward, of considerable elevation, and volcanic. In this series are included the islands of Granada, St Vincent, St Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and some others. The other series flanks these islands closely on the east, but is low, non-volcanic, and calcareous. In this series we have the islands of Tobago, Barbadoes, Marie Galante, Antigua, Barbuda, St Bartholomew, and some others.

Proceeding northwards from the volcanoes of Central America and Mexico, or the main continuation of the South American chain, we find a double mountain-range, the easternmost constituting the Rocky Mountains, which, as far as we know, are not volcanic, while the true continuation of the volcanic chain is to be found in the western range, which reappears in the peninsula of California, in which five volcanoes have been discovered; then succeeds a district in which the mountains, closely following the coast-line, are, as far as known, quiescent, till we reach latitude 45, where an active volcano exists near the mouth of the Columbia River. The range, still bordering on the Pacific, continues northwards, bending round along with the coast of Russian America to a westerly, and subsequently a south-westerly direction, and terminating, as far as the continent is concerned, in the peninsula of Alaska, in which there are several active volcanoes, one being about 14,000 feet high. But although the continent ends in this peninsula, we still have the volcanic

chain continued through the Aleutian archipelago—that remarkable series of islands which extends quite across the northern portion of the Pacific Ocean, like a succession of stepping-stones from Asia to America, and by means of which, in all probability, America received its earliest inhabitants. In these islands, eruptions are frequent, and new islands are occasionally formed by submarine eruptions, as was the case in 1796. Indeed, were it not that these islands have partaken of the subsidence which has long been going on in the bed of the Pacific Ocean, they would even now form a volcanic mountain-chain from America to Asia.

When we again arrive on the continent, we find the line of volcanic action still continued through the southern extremity of the great peninsula of Kamtschatka, where there are several active volcanoes, one reaching a height of 15,000 feet. In these frigid regions, the lava often, as in Iceland, has to burst through a barrier of ice and snow, which for a time, by its vast cooling power, retards its progress, while torrents of hot water pour down the mountain's sides, and volumes of steam ascend to the skies. However, the lava generally prevails, and then its accumulated torrent pours with redoubled force. After leaving this peninsula, the chain of volcanoes again becomes insular, being continued southwards through the Kurile Islands to the Japanese empire, where it turns towards the south-west, following the direction of the Japanese Islands, active volcanoes being found in Jesso and Nippon. Through the islands of Loo-choo and Formosa, it is continued southwards into the Philippine, and then into the Molucca Islands, where it divides into two branches, one of which passes eastwards, through New Guinea and some small islands lying eastward of the coast of Australia, till it reaches New Zealand, and subsequently may be considered to end in the great antarctic continent, thus completing the circuit of the Pacific Ocean. The other, and much more important branch, turns first westward, and afterwards to north-west, and passes through the islands of Java and Sumatra, and then through the Andaman and some other small islands in the Bay of Bengal, thus following the outline of the coast of the continent, or, perhaps more correctly speaking, following the outline of the Indian Ocean, as it had previously done that of the Pacific.

In Java, the linear arrangement of volcanoes is very well marked, the whole island being, in fact, but one continued range of vents from end to end, and containing no less than forty-six separate mountains all active. Yet it is remarkable that the Java volcanoes seldom emit lava, but vast quantities of boiling water, like the Geysers in Iceland, except that in Java a large amount of earth is mixed with the water, thus constituting rivers of mud, which pour down the mountain-sides instead of lava. They are also remarkable for emitting vast quantities of sulphur, or even sulphuric acid, which in one place strongly impregnates a whole lake, out of which a river of acid water flows, which destroys every living creature within the range of its influence, even to a considerable distance from the spot where it falls into the sea. In the gaseous emanations proceeding from some of the hollow extinct craters of this island, we find a scientific solution of the wondrous tales of the upas or poison tree of Java—tales formerly universally discredited by the scientific world, in consequence of the omission, by both the travellers who narrated what they had seen, and by the auditors who heard their accounts, of a distinct separation of the facts observed, and the theory by which those facts were accounted for. Bringing accounts of the deadly upas-tree as an observed fact, whereas it was in reality only the popular means of accounting for certain observed facts, the travellers brought their whole story into discredit; and, on the other hand, scientific men, rejecting the account of the Valley of

Death, on account of the story of the upas-tree, fell into the opposite error of refusing assent to facts very satisfactorily attested. There are, indeed, valleys of death in Java, the said valleys being extinct craters, filled with gaseous volcanic emanations, in which, of course, no living creature can continue to exist; one of these craters is called Guevo Upas, or the Valley of Poison, and is about half a mile in circumference, and filled with the bones of tigers and other animals, including birds which have dropped dead in attempting to fly over the valley, and even men, who have penetrated too far, and have been overpowered by the deadly carbonic acid gas with which the crater is filled, before they could retrace their steps. The bones of these victims alone remain, the soft parts having decayed, and the valley presents the appearance of that mentioned in Ezekiel's vision. In another crater this is reversed; for, as sulphurous acid is the gas which fills it, the bones of all the animals falling dead in it are corroded and destroyed, while the soft parts, as the skin, hair, and muscles, are preserved, being unaffected by this gas, and by it preserved from the usual decomposing effect of the oxygen of the air.

One of the most remarkable instances on record of what is called the truncation of a volcanic cone, occurred in one of the volcanoes of Java, named Papandayang, in the year 1772. By the truncation of a volcanic cone, is meant the actual falling in of the summit of a mountain, owing to its being undermined by the violence of an eruption tearing away too much of the bowels and side-walls of the mountain. During the eruption alluded to, this phenomenon took place; the ground giving way with such rapidity, that the inhabitants of the upper parts of the mountain had not even time to save themselves by flight. No less than forty villages were engulfed, and about 3000 of the inhabitants perished. The extent of the district which went down was as much as 15 miles long by 6 broad, and the height of the cone was reduced from 9000 to 5000 feet.

Vesuvius also appears to have suffered more than once from the same cause, though this is inferred from the appearance of the mountain, and not from any direct statement of authors regarding it, as the evidence gleaned from classic writers on the subject is purely circumstantial. The remains of an ancient crater, which must have been three miles in diameter, are very evident, the ridge formed by the crater wall, which on one side still exists, being known as Monte Somma. That this vast hollow must have been formed by the truncation of a very ancient and lofty peak, is almost certain, since so large a vent would otherwise be quite out of proportion with a volcano comparatively so small; but this truncation must have occurred in times quite beyond historic records, or even traditional accounts, for not a trace of mention of it is found in any author. This crater, however, was perfect within historic times, though a portion of its wall, or the seaward side, is now destroyed. This is known from the description of the figure of the mountain as given by Strabo the geographer, and also from the account given by historians of the insurrection of the gladiators under Spartacus, 72 a.c.; for we read that that chief encamped his forces in the hollow of the crater, which was accessible only by a single narrow entrance, and that the pretor Clodius—who afterwards, through the eloquence of Cicero, attained such an unenviable posthumous reputation on account of his attack on Milo—letting down his soldiers by ladders over the steep precipices of the crater, while he kept the single outlet strongly guarded, cut off the gladiators to a man. From this account, it is evident that a second truncation must have occurred subsequent to this date, for a large part of the crater is now gone, and only a low ridge, known as the Pedamentina, remains on the seaward side of the old crater, instead of the former wall. On

the other three sides, the old crater is still perfect. It has been supposed that this second truncation occurred in the great eruption which took place 79 A. D., in which the elder Pliny lost his life.

This mountain, Vesuvius, along with the other Italian volcanoes, is considered to belong to a vast chain extending from China to the Azores, running through Tartary and Central Asia to the Caucasus, Syria, and Asia Minor, and thence through Greece and Italy to Southern Spain, Portugal, and so to the Azores. It will thus be seen that this chain, for such we may consider it, unconnected though some of its links may be, runs much more inland than that above mentioned as surrounding the Pacific Ocean, and is accordingly considered to bear strongly on the question, which we shall subsequently mention, of volcanoes owing their existence to chemical action, generated by sea-water; indeed, some of these volcanoes are distant from the sea no less than 260 geographical miles, so that the validity of such an hypothesis may well be called in question. The district known as the Field of Fire, on the western shores of the Caspian, which continually emits inflammable gas, and the mud volcanoes of that district, also belong to the same grand volcanic system, whose forces are often mentioned in profane history as having manifested themselves in the form of earthquakes—as, for instance, in the earthquake by which the renowned Colossus of Rhodes was thrown down 120 years after its erection.

TO A SKYLARK.

Sing, for the morn is near, is near!

Up in the gray cloud sing and soar!

Cry to the fields: 'The day is here;'

Call to the flowers: 'The night is o'er.

Up in the gray cloud, ere it steep

Its fleeces in the golden sky—

What sun has stolen upon thy sleep?

What morning missed thy songs on high?

All night thy dappled bosom prest

The wild-thyme in some mossy nook,

Where the long grass above thy rest

Its pennoned lances bravely shook.

Didst thou not then look up to see

Who filled thy roof with silver light,

And hung with jewels over thee

The sapphire curtains of the night?

Yea—and thy heart was loud with love,

That He, their maker, so could bow,

And from those splendid heavens above,

Watch o'er so slight a thing as thou.

But when the starry hem of night

Low in the east began to burn,

And darkness took its dusky flight

Before the golden shafts of morn,

Thy wings shook off the summer dew,

And beat with joy the morning gale,

Till faint thy flying music grew

O'er hoaky wood and blossomed vale.

W. M.

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